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Sovereignty, Statehood, And Subjugation: Native Hawaiian and Japanese American Discourse over Hawaiian Statehood

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To my family, with special dedications to Uncle George, Grandma Saito, and 할머니.

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INTRODUCTION:

The long arc toward Hawaiian statehood is the historical keystone of Native Hawaiian and Japanese American political development in the islands. The near sixty-year debate over Hawaiian statehood can be divided into two phases: the first from 1900-1950, and the second from 1950-1959. In the first phase, Native Hawaiians exercised the greatest influence of any non-white group over the congressional statehood hearings. Contrastingly, Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA)—the plurality of the islands' population—were subject to intense racism and xenophobia, and treated as a threat against US national security.

This thesis argues that World War II ultimately induced a reversal of fortunes for Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans. The prolific civil rights abuse Japanese Americans faced from incarceration—contrasted with their outstanding military service—propelled the community into the national spotlight. Antithetically, Native Hawaiians suffered from unrecognized, structural discrimination along with intracommunal class-based divisions, which deprived the indigenous peoples of both national recognition and community unification. This disparity in political development was further accentuated by national circumstances: a sharp rise in the number of war veterans elected to Congress across the 1940s to 1950s oriented congressional favor toward Japanese Americans, while, at the same time, the Second Red Scare censored Native Hawaiians' demands for economic reform, the very foundations of their statehood interests.

This momentous reversal of fortunes led to the prioritization of Japanese Americans in statehood discourse by 1950, thus clearly distinguishing the second period of admission history from the first. While Japanese Americans redefined their identities based on themes of heroism and sacrifice through sharing their wartime experiences, Native Hawaiians—regardless of their viewpoints on statehood—were subjected to marginalization, erasure, and racial subjugation.

This staggering turnabout not only culminated in the passage of the Hawaii Admission Act in 1959 along AJA interests; it also extinguished the burgeoning racial solidarity the two groups had cultivated prior to World War II.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND ON GROUP RELATIONS

The United States established colonial institutions in the Hawaiian Islands beginning in the early 19th century, which enforced a race-based socioeconomic hierarchy. At the top of the social ladder sat white Americans, who exerted their dominance over non-whites through both formal and informal institutions.[1] Formal institutions, such as the US government, and more specifically, the US Navy, provided white Americans with political power as well as coercive force. Informal institutions, which exist independently of fiat, induced compliance through non-governmental means, such as social and economic influence. For example, the Big Five—an oligarchy composed of Hawaii's five largest corporations—dominated island politics for over two centuries. And in the socioreligious dimension, 19th century American missionaries supplanted Native Hawaiians with both Christianity and western culture, orienting the indigenous population toward mainstream American values.

The crushing political, economic, and social power of white Americans created a reality of inescapable subjugation for the non-white residents of Hawaii: primarily, the Native Hawaiians, Asians, Portuguese, and Puerto Ricans. During the 1830s, white Americans

[1] Note: I have elected to use "non-white" as an umbrella term for any individual of non-European descent. Although modern preference favors the term "people of color," so as to not suggest that the white identity is the standard, "people of color" gained traction and widespread use in the 1970s. "People of color" is an identity-in-solidarity, founded on the realization of racial minorities' shared experiences under white supremacy. This idea was not yet in place during the early to mid 20th century. To avoid implying that this idea of cross-cultural and interracial solidarity was realized before its time, and to avoid misrepresenting the racial climate of the time period, I use the term "non-white."

dispossessed Native Hawaiians of their traditional homelands and natural resources to institute a sugar economy. Without adequate land and capital, economic decline became the indigenous peoples' chronic plight. In the late 19th century, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Filipino, and Puerto Rican immigrants came to the Hawaiian Islands to work on plantations, subsequently joining Native Hawaiians at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. White plantation owners subjected immigrants to abysmal working conditions and wages. They also actively fomented racial rivalries to prevent the groups from unionizing by instituting segregated living quarters and employing rival groups as strikebreakers against each other.

As a result, the earliest decades of multiracial coexistence between minorities in Hawaii were defined by the concept of the zero-sum game: for every winner, there must be a loser. Because one racial group's victory entailed another's loss, each group was incentivized to prevent the others from advancing. Furthermore, one group's vulnerability, if exploited, constituted an opportunity for another to succeed. Non-white people in Hawaii overarchingly treated each other as obstacles to achieving greater equality with white elites, rather than allies working toward a similar goal. This political context, based in horizontal competition, concretized a culture of ethnic opportunism and distrust.

Throughout the late 19th century and into the early 20th century, Native Hawaiian and Japanese American relations reflected this competitive paradigm. From their initial arrival in Hawaii in 1885, many Japanese immigrants supported American annexation of Hawaii and territorial status. These first-generation Japanese Americans, or Issei, hoped that annexation would give Hawaii residents greater rights, equal to those enjoyed by mainland US citizens. As a result, many Issei approved of the US's illegal overthrow of Hawaii's constitutional monarchy in 1898, which imprisoned Queen Lili'uokalani and exacerbated the displacement,

disempowerment, and impoverishment of Native Hawaiians. As sociologist Dean Itsuji Saranillio notes, after annexation, many Issei organized and signed petitions to the US demanding voting rights in the new territorial government.[2] Shortly after annexation, Native Hawaiians retaliated. When whites in Hawaii feared that the growing Japanese population threatened their political power, Native Hawaiians became their greatest allies and joined them in the Republican Party of Hawaii.[3] For decades, Native Hawaiians opposed Japanese Americans' interests through the Republican Party platform, and furthered the notion of a malicious Japanese monolith growing in the islands.

However, in the early 20th century, the tenuous relationship between Japanese Americans and Native Hawaiians began to transition into newfound racial solidarity as broad economic developments transformed the islands. Most important among these changes, as University of Hawaii historian John P. Rosa chronicles, was urbanization in the 1920s.[4] As minorities left plantations in rural Hawaii to find work in the city, they escaped the purview of white plantation owners and, as a result, escaped forced segregation. These former laborers frequently moved to the same low-income communities, such as Kalihi-Kapalama.[5] Suddenly, Japanese Americans and Native Hawaiians were neighbors, working in close proximity at their new jobs, and sending their children to the same public schools.

The forces of urbanization thus created interracial communities in which different groups could interact in non-hostile, non-competitive settings. This metropolitan arrangement facilitated

[2] Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference," *Settler Colonial Studies*, 3:3-4, (2013): 287. For petitions, see: Kathleen Dickenson Mellen Papers, Bishop Museum Archives, MS 19, Box 3.4. Assorted letters, news clippings, and articles detailing monarchy era of Hawaii, including first generation Japanese immigrants' petitions.

[3] John P. Rosa, *Local Story: The Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2014: 45.

[4] Rosa, *Local Story: The Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History*, 2014.

[5] Rosa, *Local Story: The Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History*, 2014: 18.

interracial friendships and kinships, satisfying the most important requirement for racial reconciliation: sustained, positive socialization. As worsened racial discrimination sharpened Asian and Hawaiian grievances against whites, the personal relationships they formed in the 1920s became the foundations for their burgeoning solidarity against white supremacy.

This process is clearly reflected in Native Hawaiian and Japanese American reactions to the Massie Affair of the 1930s, as Rosa argues in *Local Story: The Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History*. The Massie Affair, or the Massie-Kahahawai Trial, was a series of criminal cases that unfolded on Oahu—and was arguably the most egregious display of white supremacy Hawaii had experienced since annexation. In 1932, five young men of Japanese, Native Hawaiian, and Chinese ancestry—Horace Ida, Joseph Kahahawai, Ben Ahakuelo, Henry Chang, and David Takai—were tried for the rape of Thalia Massie, the wife of a white Navy officer. The five defendants, who were close friends, were themselves proof of the improved social relations across non-white groups. For example, Rosa notes that when police detectives attempted to pit the boys against one another by inciting racial tensions, the boys remained steadfast:

> "Detective Watson asked Ahakuelo to remember that he was Hawaiian and to give up his Japanese friends, Ida and Takai, if they had indeed raped Thalia Massie. Surely, these Japanese youths would give him up, a Native Hawaiian, said Watson, if he did not tell his side of the story first. Ahakuelo stood by the truth and his Japanese friends, however, and asserted that neither he nor any of his friends—Native Hawaiian or otherwise—had assaulted Massie in any way."[6]

The Massie Affair became a sensational story across the US. Fitting in with traditional Jim Crow notions of non-white men defiling white women, national media outlets claimed that the Massie defendants—who were characterized as brutish, savage, and violent—were proof that the white minority of Hawaii was not safe living amongst non-white peoples.

[6] Rosa, *Local Story*, 59.

Given the hysterical media coverage of the alleged rape, the declaration of a mistrial and acquittal of the five defendants on December 6th, 1931, infuriated the white residents of Hawaii. A week later, white vigilantes kidnapped and assaulted Horace Ida, one of the Japanese defendants, and threatened to throw him twelve hundred feet from Pali Lookout. Though traumatized, Ida escaped. Joseph Kahahawai—one of the Native Hawaiian defendants—was not so fortunate. On January 8th, 1932, Thalia Massie's family and colleagues kidnapped Kahahawai. They beat him severely, and—when they could not extract from him a forced confession—murdered him.

Kahahawai's funeral was held days later, with over two thousand Native Hawaiians in attendance. It was the largest funeral procession for any non-royal Native Hawaiian in the islands' history.[7] As Rosa importantly notes, the funeral was also extremely political, with calls to Hawaiian nationalism featured in song and prayer and outright statements of rage directed toward white America. Japanese Americans also grieved, with several Japanese newsletters, such as the Hawaii Hochi, documenting the event with sorrow and fury. Both groups, looking at the broken bodies of their young men, began to understand their shared experiences of suffering under white supremacy.

Yet, the injustice of the Massie Affair only worsened. Though the Massies were found guilty of Kahahawai's murder, their ten-year prison sentences were commuted to a single hour by Lawrence Judd, Hawaii's territorial governor. The murderers spent that hour in Judd's office over tea and pleasant conversation before they were released. Mourning spiraled into outrage. The Massie Affair, as several Asian and Hawaiian news outlets explicitly memorialized it, was a direct attack against both Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans by white supremacy—a

[7] Rosa, 52-53.

"dark page" in Hawaii's history.[8] Urbanization, interpersonal relationships, and the trauma of the Massie Affair created the impetus for racial solidarity between the two groups, which had until the 1930s remained politically separate. This burgeoning solidarity, though powerful and well-founded, was tenuous and unstable in the face of decades of political competition and would ultimately be tested by the revitalization of the statehood issue after World War II.

SECTION TWO: WORLD WAR II

Hawaii's Japanese American community underwent a startling transformation during World War II, which set the stage for its prominence in the statehood movement. The climactic progression of anti-Japanese racism, catalyzed by the bombing of Pearl Harbor, resulted in a unique combination of prejudice and pressure levied against both the territory of Hawaii and its Japanese American residents. The prejudicial component directly stemmed from President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which incarcerated all "persons of Japanese ancestry" in order to prevent mass espionage.[9] Not only did Executive Order 9066 deprive Japanese Americans of due process on the basis of race—an act that Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy denounced as "legalized racism"—it also symbolically reaffirmed prejudiced views that any person of Japanese descent, regardless of citizenship, was fundamentally un-American and thus a threat to national security.[10]

However, logistics made it impossible for the federal government to enforce Executive Order 9066 on Hawaii with the same blanket uniformity it employed on the West Coast.

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[8] "The Navy and the Massie Kahahawai Case: A Timely Account of a Dark Page in Hawaiian History Worthy of Study," pamphlet published by the Hawaiian Hochi in 1951.

[9] Executive Order 9066, signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 19, 1942.

[10] Robert Havey, "The Dissenter," Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. https://bentley.umich.edu/news-events/magazine/the-dissenter/

Japanese Americans constituted 32.3% of Hawaii's population in 1940, rising to 33.5% by 1950.[11] Because they served as an integral part of the islands' labor force and economy, their mass removal was unfeasible. Therefore, the federal government selectively incarcerated Japanese Americans in Hawaii based on occupation, targeting those whose jobs required fluency in Japanese or endowed them with community influence. This qualification had traumatic consequences for the family unit. First, it inflicted heavy emotional costs, taking husbands from their wives and fathers from their children; and second, it worsened financial hardships by incapacitating families' breadwinners. Jean Ariyoshi, a Japanese American from Oahu, recalled the drastic consequences Executive Order 9066 had on her childhood: "My father lived in constant fear of being sent to an incarceration camp, as my uncle Tooru Nishikawa had been. [Tooru's] bank account was frozen and his wife's sewing school forced to close, so Uncle Tooru's wife and son… moved in with us."[12] Jean's older sister, Helen, dropped out of college in order to operate the family's business because their father—a first-generation immigrant barred from naturalization on the basis of race—was prohibited from doing so under martial law. As Jean's story illustrates, many young Japanese Americans made incredible sacrifices, such as forfeiting their educations, in order to support their families.

The Japanese American experience was worsened by the federal government's treatment of the Hawaiian Islands. Because Japanese Americans constituted a demographic plurality, the federal government treated the entire territory of Hawaii as a liability that needed to be neutralized. Accordingly, it introduced several initiatives meant to eliminate the risk of the residual Japanese American population defecting. By far the most pervasive was the 1942

[11] 1950 US Census, "Table 1.—Characteristics of the Population, for Hawaii and the Honolulu Standard Metropolitan Area, Urban and Rural," https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/pc-06/pc-6-11.pdf

[12] Jean M. Ariyoshi, *Washington Place: A First Lady's Story.* Published by the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, 2004. Presented in *The Untold Story: The Internment of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i.*

Overprint Note, a special US dollar with "HAWAII" printed on both sides. The Overprint Note was meant to mitigate the risk of the Japanese taking over the territory, sending the islands' stock of USD to the West Coast, and increasing inflation to thwart the American war effort. Should Japanese invasion or Japanese American sabotage take place, the US government was prepared to declare any Overprint Notes null and void.[13] By August of 1942, all USD in Hawaii were replaced with Overprint Notes, meaning every dollar bill circulating within the economy now served as a warning that persons of Japanese ancestry were not to be trusted.

In response to these insults, and as a result of the increased pressure on Japanese American youth, young adults in their late teens and early twenties began to take political action, which frequently channeled into military participation. Over the course of two years, a flood of young, second-generation Japanese Americans petitioned the US government for the right to enlist in the armed forces, hoping to prove their patriotism through wartime sacrifice. These young men—many of whom had watched their fathers arrested by the same country for which they would risk their lives—filled the ranks of the segregated 442nd Infantry Regiment, 100th Battalion, and Military Intelligence Service. The two phrases, "shikata ga nai," or 'it cannot be helped,'[14] and "go for broke," became their catchphrases. Combined, these expressions meant that the only way Japanese Americans could change their circumstances was by proving anti-Japanese prejudices wrong—even if it meant sacrificing their lives to do so.[15] When Daniel Inouye, 442nd veteran and future US senator, left Hawaii for the European theater in 1944, his father gave him a farewell that spoke volumes about the community's stakes in the war. "Whatever you do," Hyotaro Inouye said gravelly, "do not dishonor the family, and do not

[13] Pearl Harbor Visitors Bureau, "The History of the Hawaii Overprint Note."
[14] George Matsui, interview from Hanashi Oral History Archives, Go For Broke National Education Center, 1998.
[15] Go For Broke National Education Center, "History."

dishonor the country."[16] This notion of sacrifice in the face of discrimination became a solemn vow for the Japanese Americans of Hawaii and mobilized the population by emphasizing the need for change in the post-war period.

Contrastingly, Native Hawaiians' World War II experiences were marked by stagnation rather than mobilization, for two main reasons. The first was political: the Native Hawaiian community comprised just 15% of Hawaii's total population in 1940 and 17% in 1950.[17] Although from 1940 to 1950 the Native Hawaiian population had increased by 56.2%, this growth constituted only a 2.2% increase in the community's proportion of the islands' population. As a result, Native Hawaiians experienced declining influence in the territorial government and found their interests excluded from the Hawaii Republican and Democratic Parties' platforms. These unfavorable circumstances were further inflamed by social and political prejudices. As historian Ronald Williams writes: "Negative racial stereotypes concerning native competence in political leadership had become widely accepted in Hawaii, masking a five-decade record of native rule over… the Kingdom of Hawaii."[18]

Although these prejudices were significant in that they relegated many indigenous peoples to positions of marginal consideration in politics—therefore disadvantaging them in the governance of their native lands—they did not constitute national persecution. As a result, Native Hawaiians' military service was not endowed with the same urgent political meaning that AJA service carried. Upward of 12% of Hawaii's servicemen were of Native Hawaiian ancestry,

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16 Star Advertiser, "Inouye: 20-Page Commemorative Edition." December 21, 2012; see also: Daniel Inouye, quote from keynote speech delivered for the 50th anniversary of the Regimental Combat Team in Hawaii, March 24, 1993.

17 OHA Data Book. "The Population of Hawaii by Race/Ethnicity: US Census 1900-2010," http://www.ohadatabook.com/T01-03-11u.pdf.

18 Ronald Williams Jr., "Race, Power, and the Dilemma of Democracy: Hawaii's First Territorial Legislature, 1901," *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, vol. 49 (2015): 4.

but without urgent political impetus for community mobilization, these veterans' sacrifices went unpoliticized—hence foregoing unification of the indigenous people.

The second problem Native Hawaiians faced was of economic hardship. About one fourth of the Native Hawaiian population resided in rural Hawaii—constituting 18.1% of the rural population—and worked in the agricultural sector. However, by 1950, rural Hawaii had become an economic backwater: 49% of the general rural population made less than the average American family made per year (less than $3,300), and approximately 17% of the rural population made less than $1,000 per year, or less than one third of an average American's income.[19] Even before the war, rural working-class Hawaiians suffered from a variety of economic maladies, such as high rents on infertile lands, draconian business contracts, and competition with mainland producers. The onset of scarcity and rationing during World War II only worsened Native Hawaiians' prospects, as high costs and limited agricultural efficacy ran up against severe contractions in input and commodity markets. Worse yet, Native Hawaiians' political stagnation only prolonged their economic plight, as deteriorating governmental influence diminished their ability to advocate for necessary economic reform.

Additionally, severe wealth inequality within the Native Hawaiian community bred class-based divisions. The concentration of political and economic power among the Hawaiian elite—mostly mixed-white individuals, and often descendants of the Hawaiian monarchy—was staggering. Many elites made well over $100,000 annually from their estates without having to do any labor (equivalent to roughly $1,100,000 in 2021). Specific estimates of Native

[19] 1950 US Census, "Table 1.—Characteristics of the Population." Accessed via: https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/pc-06/pc-6-11.pdf.
For calculations of percentages of rural income, see table 11. Subtract the count of urban families and unrelated individuals from the total count of families and unrelated individuals making $1,000 or less; between $1,000-$1,999; and between $2,000-$2,999. Divide by the total number of rural habitants (25,600/52,500).

Hawaiians' average incomes are not reported in the US Census, so the best scholars can do is make loose comparisons given general data. As reported previously as a benchmark, the average American family earned about $3,300 per year.[20] Clearly, the Native Hawaiian elites lived in an entirely different world from average Americans, and by proxy, average Native Hawaiians. These staggering differences in material circumstances created divergent political interests and bred class-based resentment, impeding Native Hawaiian political mobilization.

During the Second World War, it became the clear that the prejudices Native Hawaiians had endured for centuries were to be definitively overshadowed by the more blatant displays of discrimination levied against Japanese Americans. Institutional keystones of systemic racism against natives—economic barriers to entry into the agricultural industry, cultural erasure, and inferior access to education—had crystallized over the past century. The political and economic character of the nation in the early 20th century was highly individualistic and proved incredibly unsympathetic to arguments about the importance of circumstance in shaping economic outcomes. Thus, there was no mainstream recognition of the institutional disadvantages Native Hawaiians faced. Contrastingly, the incarceration of Japanese Americans was highly visible at a national level, with condemnation of the act—though it was the minority opinion—voiced in the Supreme Court. The unique political characteristics of the hardships Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans endured resulted in their differential levels of mobilization during World War II. The less visible grievances of Native Hawaiians, combined with ongoing internal class tensions, would have long-lasting consequences for the community's ability to advance their interests in the statehood debate.

[20] US Department of Commerce, Demographics of the 1952 US Census, Series P-60, no. 9. Accessed via: https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/1952/demographics/p60-09.pdf

SECTION THREE: STATEHOOD EFFORTS REJUVENATED

The post-war resurgence of the Hawaii statehood movement found precedent in the pre-territorial era. The original annexationists of the late 19th century held full admission into the union as their long-term goal, and they and their successors brought three statehood hearings before Congress in 1903, 1937, and 1938.[21] Pro-statehood arguments prior to World War II highlighted Hawaii's strategic significance as an outpost in the Pacific and its growing economic strength via the islands' agricultural industries. However, these positive attributes could not overcome the power of anti-statehood sentiment, which emphasized that the racial composition of the territory made it irredeemable. Such prejudices were crystallized by the 1930s Massie Affair and the consequent sensationalist media coverage that claimed multiracial societies threatened white America. These de facto racist attitudes became insurmountable when paired with the political considerations of Congress in the late 1930s. Both the House and Senate were reluctant to support admission, as it would unleash a plethora of complicated questions that fundamentally challenged the status quo of race relations in America. Most notably, elected officials speculated that Hawaiian statehood could lead to naturalization rights for non-white immigrants, or even worse, non-white congressmen sent to the US Capitol. These fears were further heightened by the Bombing of Pearl Harbor and its inflammation of anti-Japanese racism.

Past experiences from the statehood debates of the early 20th century thus informed a post-war statehood movement that understood the necessity of confronting the racial issues at the heart of the political discourse. But the movement needed to be careful about how it navigated

[21] US Congress, "Statehood for Hawaii: Hearing on S. Con. Res. 18 Before the Joint Comm. on Hawaii," 75th Cong., 1-386 1937: https://law-hawaii.libguides.com/c.php?g=956376&p=7410323

the racial climate—and its leaders had specifically learned that racism was to be refuted with logic rather than morals. Instead of fundamentally rejecting the prejudiced claims that opponents made, statehood proponents accommodated mainstream assumptions Americans held about non-white peoples. For example, when statehood opponents in the 1930s claimed that Hawaii's Japanese residents were un-American because they continued to fund Japanese language schools, proponents cited the decreasing fluency of second-generation Japanese Americans as a rebuttal.[22] There was no organized attempt to refute the foundational assumption that bilingualism, or Japanese culture more broadly, was inherently un-American.

It was precisely because the post-war statehood movement needed a logical rebuttal against race-based objections to admission that the Japanese American community became its ultimate political weapon. Japanese Americans had become the face of Hawaii's racial problem during World War II as a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Executive Order 9066. Their national plight, and eventual public redemption vis-à-vis the recognition of their military successes and sacrifices, made Japanese Americans a logical counterpoint to the prejudices statehood opponents frequently utilized. First, the 442nd, 100th Battalion, and MIS could be used as proof that non-whites were not the aggressors the Massie Affair made them out to be. Not only had the Japanese Americans of Hawaii stayed loyal to the US, they had also actively volunteered to protect white Americans and their interests in the armed forces. And second, the military heroism of the community also had the potential to legitimize its members as worthy of partaking in the American body politic—not only as voters, but someday, as elected officials themselves. Thus, the Japanese American community offered the statehood movement a method

[22] US Congress, "Statehood for Hawaii," 75th Cong., 1-386 (1937).

for combatting the biggest obstacles to their goals: the racist fears of both the American public and Congress.

The country's acknowledgment of its wrongdoing toward the Japanese American community was in no way instantaneous. However, momentum toward the community's public redemption had already begun within a year of the war's end. On July 15th, 1946, President Truman awarded the 442nd Infantry Regiment and 100th Battalion over 12,000 decorations for their outstanding military service.[23] Upon conferral of their medals, Truman declared: "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice—and you have won."[24] Energized by both national recognition of anti-Japanese racism and positive reception of Japanese American veterans, statehood proponents became convinced that their goals were no longer unfeasible.

Starting at the local level, pro-statehood leaders developed organizational and institutional support for the movement. For organizational support, statehood leaders persuaded the Democratic and Republican Parties of Hawaii that statehood was now more viable than ever before. Partisan interests, namely the desire of both parties to fill Hawaii's future seats in Congress, motivated the organizations to rally support for the statehood movement.[25] Outside of the government, Hawaii's branches of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans Club, and 442nd Veterans Club also began to organize. They would eventually lend great credibility to the statehood movement by legitimizing it as a method for racial reparations toward the Japanese American community.

[23] Time Magazine, July 22, 1946, accessed via Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA): https://java.wildapricot.org/Nisei-Legacy

[24] Quote by President Harry Truman, at Veterans Award Ceremony, July 15, 1947. Accessed via Nisei Veterans Legacy Institute.

[25] Interview with Daniel Aoki, conducted by Chris Conybeare and Warren Nishimoto in Manoa, Oahu. September 12, 1984.

In terms of institutional support, statehood proponents used the territorial government, particularly the territorial legislature, to provide financial and administrative aid to their movement. Perhaps the best example of this is the Hawaii Statehood Commission, which was formed in 1947 out of the Hawaii Equal Rights Commission. The Hawaii Statehood Commission appropriated public funds to disperse pro-statehood materials and investigate anti-statehood sentiment, constituting a powerful, formal vehicle for both political mobilization and the extinguishing of dissent.[26] Additionally, the Hawaii Statehood Commission represented a symbolic shift in the movement's ideological stance. The transformation of the local government's apparatus for advancing equal rights into one that advanced statehood was, of course, indicative of the movement's emphasis that the two were interconnected goals.

The post-war resurgence of the statehood question was a definitive result of the national spotlight fixed on the Japanese American community. Forced to suffer in the limelight of racism and denigration and then gradually elevated to the highest honors of military recognition, the community gained previously unthinkable political influence and made the post-war statehood movement more viable than it had ever been before. The statehood movement would increasingly take advantage of Japanese American narratives to combat the racist and fearmongering tactics of the anti-statehood faction.

SECTION FOUR: STATEHOOD CONTROVERSY AND ANTI-STATEHOOD SENTIMENT

Although the majority of territorial officials supported statehood, everyday opinions on admission varied across racial and socioeconomic boundaries. In fact, the degree of enthusiasm and reasons for supporting statehood were markedly different between the Japanese American

[26] Hawaii Supreme Court: *Campbell v. Stainback Et Al*, 38 Haw. 310, 1949.

and Native Hawaiian communities, derivative of their experiences in World War II. Japanese Americans were the only racial group to achieve a consensus of support for admission. The AJA community overwhelmingly viewed statehood as a method for attaining legitimacy and symbolic recognition of their equal citizenship. Though such sentiments were similarly present throughout the 1930s, they were much more urgent and fully explicit in the post-war period. As a result, the AJA community was fiercely enthusiastic over admission.

Conversely, Native Hawaiians were almost evenly divided. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, approximately one third of Native Hawaiians supported statehood; one third opposed it; and the remaining third was neutral or undecided.[27] The lack of consensus among the indigenous people directly stemmed from the absence of unifying factors and events from World War II. Native Hawaiians were not specifically targeted by the federal government on the basis of race, nor were they conflated with the enemy, as Japanese Americans had been. As a result, there was no single goal that all Native Hawaiians shared by virtue of racial identity in the post-war period. Additionally, World War II weakened the significance of racial identity relative to socioeconomic identity amongst Native Hawaiians. As previously discussed, the working class had suffered immensely during the war, and in the post-war period, was interested in statehood solely for its capacity to beget economic relief. Native Hawaiian elites, on the other hand, were well insulated from economic hardship and unconcerned with material interests. Spurred on by diverse, immaterial desires such as Hawaiian nationalism, American patriotism, and political ideology, the elites pursued radical stances all across the statehood spectrum and increasingly divided the community. The partitioning of the Native Hawaiian people, combined with

[27] Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984: 158.

growing dissonance between working-class and elite interests, prevented both political consensus and full mobilization around the issue of admission.

Although pro-statehood and anti-statehood sentiment were evenly matched across the Native Hawaiian community, the contrasting viewpoints did not face equal political circumstances. While the pro-statehood movement flourished, the Native Hawaiian anti-statehood faction was unable to organize due to a key structural disadvantage: people were highly unwilling to publicly voice anti-statehood sentiment out of fear of repercussions.[28] Due to the popularity of pro-statehood sentiment in the islands, opponents of admission from all backgrounds reasonably feared backlash for voicing dissident views. However, Native Hawaiians in particular were vulnerable to retaliation. First, there was the growing social stigma of speaking out against admission, given its importance for the Japanese American community. The islands' urbanization in the 1930s brought Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans closer than ever before, and this newfound proximity made it difficult for Hawaiians to publicly oppose the core interests of their neighbors. Additionally, threats of informal political sanctions from the pro-statehood majority of the territorial government and employment-related retaliation from pro-statehood businesses and contractors were powerful incentives to keep quiet—especially for a community that had endured decades of financial hardship.

Consequently, a small cohort of Native Hawaiian elites who were sufficiently insulated from social, economic, and political repercussions became the faction's mouthpieces. John Ho'opale and Alice Kamokila Campbell—two elite territorial officials of mixed Hawaiian ancestry—are two prime examples. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Ho'opale and Campbell led the Native Hawaiian anti-statehood faction before Congress. They compensated for their

[28] Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984: 158.

lack of visibility by utilizing aggressive tactics, exemplified by Campbell's activity throughout the 1940s. In 1947, Campbell created two anti-statehood organizations: the Anti-Statehood Clearing House, which sent anti-statehood materials to the federal government,[29] and the Commonwealth Status for Hawaii Organization, meant to advance an alternative to statehood.[30] Then, in 1949, she launched a successful suit against the Hawaii Statehood Commission for appropriating public funds to disseminate pro-statehood materials—taking on the territorial governor and eleven of the most influential territorial officials by herself. Campbell's legacy characterizes the anti-statehood faction: a disadvantaged force sustained by individual initiative and resources, rather than mobilization of the constituency.

The few publicly anti-statehood Native Hawaiians also compensated by allying with non-Hawaiians in the anti-statehood faction to amplify their voices. Generally, such individuals were white residents of Hawaii, who held striking anti-Japanese prejudices. At the foundational level, these whites and anti-statehood Native Hawaiians both fundamentally rejected the notion that Japanese Americans had a legitimate claim over the islands. White opponents argued that people of Japanese ancestry were inherently un-American and thus lacked the legitimate right to make decisions over the territory, while Native Hawaiian opponents argued that agency over the islands was a prerogative reserved solely for the indigenous peoples. Ultimately, Native Hawaiians accommodated and even adopted the racist arguments of their white counterparts. John Ho'opale, territorial official, demonstrates this trend in his 1937 testimony before Congress on statehood. Calling them "half-Americans" at best, Ho'opale argued that Japanese Americans threatened the United States and the Hawaiian Islands. He even went so far as to claim Hawaiian

[29] "Anti-Statehood 'Clearing House,'" *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, September 18, 1947.
[30] Bell, *Last Among Equals*, 1984: 158.

statehood should be denied in order to keep the US free of Asian citizens and a predominantly white country, concluding bluntly: "I want to be frank—the American tradition is a white man's tradition, and I like that tradition."[31]

The Native Hawaiian anti-statehood faction's accommodation of white supremacy stemmed from the indigenous people's desperation and anxiety over the racial climate of the Hawaiian Islands. The Hawaiians who opposed admission sought to preserve indigenous legitimacy and control over their lands, and believed that the native peoples should be prioritized over non-natives. Due to the growing number of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, the native people directed their general aversion toward non-indigenous outsiders against the AJA community. Many Native Hawaiians feared that Japanese Americans would disproportionately benefit from statehood, using their voting power to monopolize the state's federal representation at the expense of the native peoples. These potent fears manifested clearly in anti-statehood sentiment. John Ho'opale concluded his testimony in 1937 with an ode to these anxieties: "My people [are] the original Hawaiians—not these 'naturalized Hawaiians,' or 'foster Hawaiians.' We want to live on this land without interference from outsiders... I do not want to see any other race dominate the Hawaiian Islands."[32]

Of course, Native Hawaiians' reliance on and accommodation of their white counterparts in the anti-statehood faction greatly diminished their ability to mobilize. First, accommodation of racist rhetoric further cemented anti-statehood opinion as inherently anti-Japanese. This worsened the stigma associated with anti-statehood sentiment, and increasingly disincentivized Hawaiians from speaking out. Additionally, because anti-statehood Native Hawaiians had

[31] US Congress, Joint Committee on Hawaii, "Statehood for Hawaii," 75th Congress, October 20, 1937: 173.
[32] US Congress, "Statehood for Hawaii," 75th Congress, 1937: 173.

actively incorporated and supported white interests, they forfeited the opportunity to frame opposition as a specific call to action for indigenous peoples. The Native Hawaiians of the pro-statehood movement faced a similar problem in the late 1940s as they increasingly incorporated Japanese American interests.

The accommodation of non-indigenous interests in Native Hawaiian statehood-related advocacy, against the backdrop of class-based tensions amongst the elites and working class, prevented the Native Hawaiian community from fully mobilizing in the post-war period. The resultant divisions across the statehood spectrum inhibited both support and rejection of admission from achieving a monopoly over the Hawaiian identity. This stunted political development would severely disadvantage Native Hawaiians in statehood discourse, relative to the rapidly mobilizing and unified Japanese American community.

SECTION FIVE: POLITICAL CLIMATE, 1945-1946

The renewed statehood movement of the post-war period demonstrated a shift in favor for Japanese American interests, given their high level of community organization. However, the two greatest advantages they would enjoy—recognition of military heroism and greater representation—were not fully set in place until the early 1950s. Although 45% of the 79th Congress were veterans,[33] generating some sympathy toward Japanese Americans, the first post-war statehood hearings were held in early January of 1946, and the 442nd and 100th Battalion would only be officially recognized and commended by President Truman six months later. Thus, hard proof of Japanese American sacrifice had not yet circulated through the country, and there were no strong incentives for the pro-statehood movement—headed by elite white and

[33] Aaron Blake, "The Long Decline of Veterans in Congress," *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2013.
See also: Katherine Schaeffer and Pew Research Center, "The Changing Face of Congress," March 20, 2021.

Native Hawaiian territorial politicians—to increase Japanese American representation in the statehood hearings. At this point in time, Japanese American service during World War II was merely a talking point used to rebut anti-statehood claims that centered around Japanese American disloyalty.

The lack of AJA representation before Congress meant that the community was unable to defend itself. As a result, many anti-statehood witnesses disparaged members of the community—even questioning the intentions behind their military service—without repercussions. For example, Charles Maschke, a statehood opponent of mixed white-Hawaiian descent, launched into a severe rebuke of Japanese American veterans: "there has been so much publicity about these Nisei American soldiers... But prior to 1945, '41, they were not loyal to the American flag." He added, "when the war broke out the pressure was so great against them that they had to volunteer … to shadow the suspicions over their heads."[34] The congressmen present noted Maschke's volatility but did not comment on his obvious prejudice. A few hours later, W. H. Tilley—a veteran of two wars and a Hawaii resident—echoed Maschke's arguments. "We have just completed a terrible war with Japan, and the American people will not permit 200,000 people of Japanese descent to become citizens," Tilley testified. "We owe them honors and no one should discount any of their achievements… [But] the fact that our AJA soldiers did such an excellent job in the armed forces is not now, nor never will be, any standard on which we can base statehood for Hawaii."[35]

Because Japanese American ascendancy was still in its infancy, Native Hawaiians were able to exercise identity-based influence over the statehood debate in the 1940s. Overarchingly,

[34] US Congress, House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii: Hearing on H.R. Con. Res. 236 Before the House Subcommittee of the Committee of the Territories," 79th Congress, 1946: 263.
[35] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 258.

the group asserted the paramount importance of Hawaiian interests and identity to admission. David Ka'apuawaokamehameha, a struggling Hawaiian farmer from the island of Oahu, emphasized this exact point in his pro-statehood testimony. "Gentlemen, for the protection of my people, grant us statehood," he told Congress. "Our Delegate, [Samuel Wilder King]—I have much good feeling for him; but he forgets one point, the important part—the natives of these islands should be taken care of first."[36]

Ka'apuawaokamehameha's testimony is a prime example not only of prioritization of Native Hawaiian interests in statehood discourse, but also the representation of the middle and working classes before Congress in the 1940s. As previously discussed, everyday Hawaiians' concerns were quite different from those of their elite representatives, as they centered around socioeconomic matters rather than ideological interests. Furthermore, because a significant portion of the Hawaiian population still resided in rural Hawaii and was employed in agriculture, issues related to land resources as well as business and contracting practices were of utmost importance to the working class.

As a result, many Native Hawaiians used the statehood hearings of 1946 as an avenue for requesting federal aid rather than arguing for or against statehood. Three Hawaiian homesteaders—Ernest U'u, Gus Nihoa, and Marian Peters—exemplify this trend. The Hawaiian men detailed their communities' hardships with incredible desperation: Nihoa focused on the infertile land being given to Native Hawaiians for homesteading, fearful he could not pay his debts to the pineapple company with which he was contracted, and Peters discussed rampant resource scarcity in the outer islands.[37] U'u focused on the water shortages that plagued Mau'i

[36] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 240.
[37] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 323.

and Moloka'i, and pleaded with representatives: "If your heart is with the Hawaiians, then you will bring water into this land. I am quite sure that is our only salvation."[38]

U'u, Nihoa, and Peters' testimonies show that the working class's priority was attaining tangible economic relief, which may have taken the form of debt forgiveness, reform to the Hawaiian Homestead Act—which had created a poorly-managed land trust for Native Hawaiian farmers—or improvements in rural infrastructure. Statehood itself was only important for its capacity to beget such initiatives. U'u and Nihoa, when asked about their opinions on admission, gave tentative responses demonstrating this sentiment. U'u replied: "Yes, I am in favor of statehood. Perhaps in some way if we get statehood, we will be taken care of by the Federal Government, at least the Hawaiian race will be… That is the only reason [I want it]."[39] Nihoa was more unsure, but gave a similar answer: "I don't know whether we would be okay or not, but if our representative here is in favor, and wants it, it makes me feel I would be in favor of it, too." He then added: "For what us poor people could get by having statehood, as all we want is just a means of getting food and clothing. It would be good."[40]

Conversely, the Native Hawaiian elite—who enjoyed political power and wealth unimaginable to the average Hawaiian—held much loftier ideals centered around intangible interests, such as political ideology and Hawaiian nationalism. Former territorial lawmaker Manase Makekau exemplified the latter when he testified in favor of statehood, lauding with reverence: "Oh, Honolulu, I love you, Honolulu. How long will it be? You are the queen of the ocean, and then soon, the State of Hawaii will become the king of the ocean."[41] Makekau's

[38] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 321.
[39] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 323.
[40] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 323.
[41] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 320.

romantic view of Hawaiian statehood as realization of the islands' royal destiny could not have been more distant from the disillusioned perspectives of the impoverished working class.

The divergence in working-class and elite interests was occasionally mediated by more moderate Hawaiian speakers. One such moderate was the influential Native Hawaiian Victor Stewart Kaleoaloha Houston, also a former territorial official. Houston advocated for both elite interests and working-class interests, and adeptly combined the reasoning of both groups in a compatible manner. First, he boldly acknowledged working-class people's suffering: "The people of the Hawaiian race are the only native peoples under the American flag that have not been taken care of by the Federal Government."[42] Then, interweaving elite Hawaiians' interests in expanded political power, Houston claimed that statehood would give Hawaiians the ability to initiate economic reform necessary to alleviate the suffering of the poor. This compatibility between elite and working-class Hawaiian interests was significant for strengthening the overall bargaining power and influence of the group before Congress.

However, Houston's advocacy would prove to be impermanent, much to the detriment of everyday Hawaiians. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Native Hawaiian representation before Congress would significantly decrease, with remaining voices marginalized. The little remaining Hawaiian representation would become concentrated amongst the elite, sidelining moderate or tentative opinions. As a result of the elites' insulation from financial hardship, along with the growing emphasis on Japanese American identity to statehood, there were no incentives to voice the concerns of the Hawaiian working class. Thus, struggling workers like U'u, Nihoa, and Peters would eventually become disconnected from the statehood debate.

[42] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 314.

Another important component of Native Hawaiian political agency in the statehood hearings of 1946 was the manner through which the indigenous people navigated the hostile racial climate of the continental US. Although prejudice was a universal experience for the community regardless of wealth, elites were able to adapt to their circumstances with greater dignity than their working-class peers. In response to the racism they faced, Hawaiian elites presented themselves before Congress as conventional examples of loyal American citizens, while working-class Hawaiians were forced to conform to harmful stereotypes.

The Hawaiian elites' strategy is well-exemplified by their testimonies in the 1946 hearings. Take, for example, Hawaiian statehood delegates and territorial officials David K. Trask and Judge Walter Meheula Heen. Trask claimed that, following the monarchy's overthrow and American annexation, Hawaiians enjoyed the new rights and liberties of American citizenship and grew to love the country. In a complementary fashion, Heen asserted that Native Hawaiians "would not exchange their right of American citizenship for anything else in the world."[43] Trask and Heen, however, did not mention the historic frictions between Hawaiians and white Americans, which had led to the Massie Affair just fifteen years prior. By characterizing Hawaiians as eager and educated patriots who would not dare challenge the political status quo, this strategy made Hawaiians non-threatening to white American hegemony and highly palatable and credible to Congress.

On the other hand, working-class Native Hawaiians were forced to flatter Western ideals and also exaggerate and fabricate individual shortcomings to fit into degrading stereotypes. Mainstream prejudices characterized Native Hawaiians as lazy, backwards, and unintelligent. These degrading assumptions necessitated self-subjugation at both the personal and communal

[43] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 20.

levels. David Ka'apuawaokamehameha was one of many forced to adopt this humiliating strategy. The farmer introduced himself to Congress with the disclaimer that he was barely fluent in English and practically illiterate, much to the representatives' amusement. He then presented Congress with myriad Hawaiian foodstuffs—raw fish, taro, and poi—as products of the free labor that flourished after US annexation, and spoke gratefully about the overthrow of the monarchy. Ka'apuawaokamehameha also repeatedly referenced his Christian faith to show he was aligned with mainstream American views, claiming that the formerly polytheistic Hawaiians were "found" as "pagans in the dark age," and he was glad that Americans "civilized" them.[44]

Such denigrations of personal identity and Hawaiian identity further extended themselves into Ka'apuawaokamehameha's direct statehood arguments. The farmer, after referencing the Hawaiian community's need for federal assistance, joked: "If we adopted statehood and if something is wrong here, we can call up Uncle Sam and you boys: 'hey, help please, Uncle, something is wrong!'"[45] The chamber erupted into laughter at Ka'apuawaokamehameha's performance. Such platitudes and deprecations appealed strongly to white prejudices which had historically emphasized paternalistic treatment toward the indigenous people; therefore, Ka'apuawaokamehameha's comfortable fit into pre-existing, racist stereotypes made him palatable to Congress.

One might argue that it is impossible to assert Ka'apuawaokamehameha's intentions from his testimony. However, Ka'apuawaokamehameha fully understood the importance of gaining Congress's favor, as he emphasized to them: "I get an opportunity to speak to [you] face

[44] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 239.
[45] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 240.

to face, not to pass it to the other guy, who passes the buck, and it never reaches you. It's a golden opportunity that I have to express my thoughts."[46] For working-class Hawaiians like Ka'apuawaokamehameha, U'u, Nihoa, and Peters—who struggled to feed and clothe themselves and their children—testifying before Congress offered them a chance at securing economic relief and survival. With such extreme stakes, personal pride was inconsequential as long as they could make their demands known. After winning Congress over with his performance of an indigenous caricature, Ka'apuawaokamehameha did exactly that. In a sobering tone, he demanded: "Coming down to statehood, what protection will we Hawaiians have when statehood is adopted? What protection?"[47]

The contrasting statements of Trask and Heen versus Ka'apuawaokamehameha demonstrate class-based privileges that divided the Hawaiian community. Although both groups flattered Americanism whilst subordinating Hawaiian culture, elites were able to maintain their dignity at the individual level while working-class Hawaiians conformed to racist stereotypes in order to gain congressional favor. That being said, the group as a whole still suffered a baseline hardship: subordination to white supremacy. The humiliation of Native Hawaiians in this regard lies in devastating contrast to the future identity-based privileges Japanese Americans would enjoy. While Japanese Americans would increasingly base their statehood advocacy on narratives of heroism and dignity, Native Hawaiians had to present themselves as comical and subservient in order to be heard.

SECTION SIX: POLITICAL CLIMATE, 1948-1950

[46] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 240.
[47] House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 240.

The statehood hearings of 1948 demonstrate the critical transition between the two major phases of admission history. The 1948 hearings were the last occasion in which Native Hawaiians exercised meaningful control over statehood discourse; they were also the first occasion in which the Japanese American community posed a significant challenge to Native Hawaiians in the statehood debate. While Native Hawaiians visibly struggled to retain influence and control over discourse, Japanese Americans were beginning to emerge with their identity-based, pro-statehood narrative in the works. This transitional year, in all of its political frictions, is key to understanding the relationship between Japanese Americans' rise to dominance and Native Hawaiians' political marginalization within statehood history.

A variety of events initiated these changes, the first and most foundational being the country's growing interest in and empathy for Japanese Americans. In the summer of 1946, President Truman awarded thousands of AJA veterans for their military service. The ceremony received favorable media attention, piquing the public's interest in Japanese Americans. As a result, Congress inquired about the AJA community on behalf of their constituents—and in a manner markedly different from that of the past. Rather than asking witnesses if Japanese Americans were indeed malicious enemy aliens, as they had done throughout the early 20th century, Congress inquired on Japanese Americans' experiences with racism and their military service. By 1948, the legislature was beginning to see Japanese Americans as human beings and fellow citizens, rather than mere liabilities or threats to national security.

This newfound interest in Japanese Americans diverted attention away from the Native Hawaiian community. Many Native Hawaiians who attended the hearings to testify about their community's interests were asked by Congress to testify on Japanese Americans instead. A clear example comes from two witnesses, Margaret Newman, a librarian for the Library of Hawaii,

and Dr. Pauline Frederick, principal of Kamehameha Girls' School for children of Hawaiian ancestry. Shortly after introductions, the chamber asked them to describe AJA veterans' experiences with racism. After Newman confirmed that AJA veterans suffered hardships, the presiding judge, Harrington Wimberly, commented sympathetically: "[The Japanese Americans] no doubt felt that having served their country, there shouldn't be any feeling against them on account of race."[48] Dr. Frederick quickly interjected to remind him that racism was not a unique experience to Japanese Americans: "The same thing is felt among the Hawaiians… [we hear people say] that all the Japanese should still be servants, [but they also ask why] our school, Kamehameha School, doesn't train the Hawaiians to be servants, where they belong."[49]

Native Hawaiians would face insurmountable barriers in their struggle to retain Congress's attention during the 1948 hearings. As previously discussed, the economic and political challenges Native Hawaiians faced were primarily structural; discriminatory policies restricted Hawaiians' access to fertile land for homesteading, stripped their businesses of resources and capital, disadvantaged them in attaining education and professional training, and excluded them from the platforms of the major political parties. Dismantling these barriers would require significant reform and would challenge the vested interests of white American elites. Compared to the Japanese American narrative, which held the highly visible crime of the incarceration as its main grievance, addressing insidious discrimination against Native Hawaiians offered less appeal to Congress.

The second factor in Native Hawaiians' political decline was similarly initiated by changes in national politics: namely, the second Red Scare. The anti-communist hysteria of the

[48] US Congress, Senate Committee on Public Lands, "Statehood for Hawaii: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands," 80th Congress, 2nd session on H.R.49 and S.114, January 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20, 1948: 64-67.
[49] US Congress, Senate Committee on Public Lands, "Statehood for Hawaii: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands," 80th Congress, 2nd session on H.R.49 and S.114, 1948: 64-67.

post-war period exacerbated working-class Native Hawaiians' struggles, as it unfairly painted their desire for economic reform as a betrayal of the US's capitalist ideals. At this point in time, the argument that American capitalism produced economically unfair outcomes for certain groups was factually correct, but politically incorrect according to mainstream politics. Furthermore, Native Hawaiians were particularly vulnerable to suspicion because the US had begun to associate communism with indigenous peoples. As documented by scholarship on the Indian Termination Policy, the native tribes of North America had come under anti-communist suspicion from the House Un-American Activities Committee for practicing communal lifestyles. The Native Hawaiians, by virtue of also being indigenous peoples, were cast under the same shadow of suspicion.

As such, the 1948 hearings became a political minefield for Native Hawaiians. Fearful of being labelled communists, they were forced to censor their criticisms of the US and their pleas for economic relief, while at the same time presenting themselves as perfect American patriots. These constraints made it virtually impossible for the indigenous peoples to meaningfully advocate for their interests. For example, when Representative Joseph Kaholokula of Maui, an agent with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, stated his constituents' support for statehood, the chamber prevented him from elaborating and immediately asked him to denounce communism. Kaholokula did so firmly, yet Senator Guy Cordon of Oregon pressed: "The one thing that we should be ready to fight for and die for is [freedom]… I take it that *your people*, when they asked you to express their views on statehood, have that view, and as such are

good Americans with the rest of us."[50] Kaholokula affirmed, "that is what [we] want to be: good Americans," before quietly stepping down from the podium.[51]

Of course, the Red Scare had very different effects for the elite, who were unconcerned with economic reform. Particularly, anti-statehood elites benefited greatly, and utilized anti-communist paranoia to inflame anti-Japanese prejudices. Alice Kamokila Campbell testified, "I am very proud of being an American, but I think that in the past 10 years I have lost a sense of balance here in Hawaii as to the future safety of my land." She warned gravely: "An un-American influence has come into our country: … one-third of the [islands'] population is Japanese."[52] Though Campbell was well-known locally for her fierce opposition to US imperialism, she adapted to political circumstances and presented Native Hawaiians as loyal patriots in order to denigrate the AJA community. This shows that, although Campbell was forced to censor her criticisms of the US because of the Red Scare, her desire to keep Hawaii out of the Union was not diametrically opposed to the US's Cold War interests. Campbell's weaponization of the Red Scare highlights the differential consequences the era had on Native Hawaiians of different socioeconomic statuses.

Naturally, these differences exacerbated pre-existing class tensions. Victor Kaleoaloha Houston, ever the advocate for the working class, stepped up to the podium twice in 1948, the second time to argue that Campbell was a poor representative of the Hawaiian community. "[The Native Hawaiians must] be helped by the Federal Government," he stated with conviction. "Kamokila Campbell, who appeared before… is beneficiary of the Campbell estate, with eighty-some thousand acres of the most valuable land. [She receives] an income of some $125,000 a

[50] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 80th Congress, 1948: 347. Italics added.
[51] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 80th Congress, 1948: 248.
[52] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 80th Congress, 1948: 410.

year without turning a finger."[53] Houston's testimony demonstrates that the tensions between elites and the working class were palpable, and impoverished pro-statehood Hawaiians often resented the wealthy who prioritized symbolic interests over the community's material wellbeing. The Red Scare inflamed these divisions, weakening the group as a whole.

With the impetus for the precipitous decline of Native Hawaiian influence established, the reversal of fortunes in favor of the Japanese American community becomes startlingly clear. Though cautious and tentative, Japanese Americans' 1948 testimonies constituted the community's first authentic appearance before the country in the wake of incarceration. In 1946, the community had been treated as a mere talking point by the pro-statehood movement and made few direct appearances before Congress. By 1948, many Americans—having witnessed both Japanese American humiliation in the internment, and AJA honor through military heroism—were eager to hear about Japanese Americans' experiences. With these heightened expectations, as well as an increased intolerance for the continued prejudice levied against fallen Japanese American servicemen and surviving veterans, the community broke its silence on the national stage.

Both a tipping point for the community for Japanese Americans at the individual level, the 1948 hearings saw novel and emotional accounts of AJA experiences, grounded in central themes of suffering and sacrifice. The case of Norito Kawakami exemplifies these developments. After hours of listening to statehood opponents accuse the Hawaiian Islands' non-white majority of being un-American, Kawakami stepped up to the podium to protest, despite not having planned to testify. He passionately argued that Hawaii's non-white peoples had proven themselves through military service: "Speaking for those who will never come back

[53] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 80th Congress, 1948: 418.

here alive… They were told they were fighting for the American way of life, and they have paid the full price to their native land—the ground on which they were raised, and the ground in which many will be buried when they come back."[54] Kawakami's powerful defense demonstrated the key tenets of the AJA community's developing narrative, which argued that their military sacrifice proved deservingness of statehood.

That being said, the 1948 testimonies also demonstrate that Japanese American advocacy was in its infancy. Kawakami emphasized the patriotism of all non-white Hawaii residents; he did not explicitly focus on Japanese Americans. Additionally, Kawakami did not utilize his personal experiences in his testimony, despite being a veteran of the Military Intelligence Service, which he disclosed only upon congressional inquiry. The MIS recruited Japanese Americans who were fluent in Japanese to advance military intelligence during World War II, and was credited by Major General Charles Willoughby, intelligence chief for Douglas MacArthur, with saving one million American lives and shortening the war by two years.[55] And yet, Japanese fluency was vilified; after Pearl Harbor, bilingual Japanese Americans were among the first deported to the mainland for incarceration. The lack of engagement with military narratives—which clearly demonstrated Japanese American sacrifices in the face of discrimination—exemplifies the still unorganized nature of AJA political participation in 1948.

An important reason that Kawakami and other Japanese American veterans did not immediately disclose their personal experiences stemmed from cultural and personal factors. Traditionally, Japanese culture stresses the preeminence of individuals maintaining their dignity and honor so as to not shame their communities. The painful experiences of the incarceration

[54] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 80th Congress, 1948: 318.

[55] Quote from Major General Charles Willoughby, as documented by the Nisei Veterans Legacy Institute. Historical Information on Military Intelligence Service accessed via: https://www.nvlchawaii.org/nisei-war-pacific-and-mis#:~:text=The%20MIS%20%E2%80%9Csaved%20over%201,Douglas%20MacArthur.

were perceived, and oftentimes still are by survivors today, as sources of immense shame rather than outrage. Testifying about personal experiences fundamentally necessitated forfeiting privacy and yielding community humiliation and trauma to a hostile American public. It would take several years for AJA veterans to publicize and politicize their experiences.

Still, testimonies like Kawakami's served as important precursors to bringing important stories forward in statehood discourse, as they allowed the nation its first real glimpse into the Japanese American experience. Thus, the 1948 statehood hearings—though tentative in their degrees of change—were the definitive point at which the Native Hawaiian and Japanese American communities' political fortunes entered into a critical state of reversal.

SECTION SEVEN: POLITICAL CLIMATE OF THE EARLY 1950's

The congressional hearings of 1953 and 1954 demonstrate the tangible reversal of fortunes for the Japanese American and Native Hawaiian communities. In five short years, Japanese Americans' narratives of military sacrifice had become the main focus of the pro-statehood movement, which emphasized that the AJA community had proved its loyalty and therefore earned Hawaii the right of admission. The group's dominance over the statehood debate sidelined Native Hawaiians, who were tellingly absent from the 1954 congressional hearings.

Several factors led to the ascendance of Japanese Americans in statehood. First was the shift in sentiment toward Japanese Americans, sufficiently complete by 1950. The country had had several years to digest Truman's commendation of the 442nd, 100th Battalion, and MIS.

These veterans helped win over moderate white Americans, who—though by no means egalitarian or non-racist—were at least willing to reconsider their views on Japanese Americans. This victory over the moderate plurality made Americans who still held virulent anti-Japanese prejudices a stigmatized group. Given Japanese Americans' military heroism, anti-statehood arguments predicated on racial prejudice were discredited for irrationality and bigotry. This shift in public sentiment was then complemented by changes in Congress. By 1950, veterans comprised over 50% of the House and Senate, many having served in World War II.

As a result of improved public sentiment, more Americans than ever before positively acknowledged Japanese Americans, and were now willing to defend them. For example, during the 1954 hearings, Senator George Malone of Nevada continuously used the racial slur, "Jap," to refer to Hawaii's Japanese Americans, and questioned the population's loyalty. The current witness was Frank Fasi, Hawaii's Democratic National Committeeman and a veteran of the Marines. Fasi reprimanded Malone, calling the slur a "slap in the face" to the AJA community.[56] After Fasi's testimony, which emphasized Japanese Americans' selflessness toward a country that had imprisoned their loved ones, Malone apologized: "I am sorry I used the word 'Japs.' I guess there is some resentment there… A person ought to have more respect for the races."

The Fasi-Malone interaction is incredibly telling for AJA politics. Fasi's defense of Japanese Americans, as a white leader of the statehood movement, shows that the movement was beginning to advocate for the community, rather than simply using it as a rhetorical tool to achieve a coincident goal. Additionally, Fasi's local political power and his status as a veteran gave him considerable political clout, which he used to secure Malone's apology. Malone went above and beyond to state his regret, even complimenting Fasi for marrying a Japanese

[56] US Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Statehood for Hawaii," 83rd Congress, 1st and 2nd session on S.49, S.51, and H.R. 3575, June and July 1953, January 1954: 183.

American woman—thus stating his opposition to anti-miscegenation codes, still powerfully enforced across the country. Malone's stated acceptance of interracial marriage was a clear extension of an olive branch, which he strengthened with his conclusion: "[Fasi], you can be proud of your family. There is no question about that. We have some fine Japanese in my State of Nevada—not very many—but they are good citizens."[57] Malone's submission to Fasi demonstrates the powerful allies the Japanese American community had accumulated, not only against statehood opponents—but also, against elected officials.

The Japanese American community's political improvement was a direct result of coming to terms with their war experiences. This communal movement was driven by young Nisei veterans of the 442nd and 100th Battalion, who were quickly mobilizing at the local level. With political practice in the islands, they had finely tuned their rhetorical strategies for the national stage by the early 1950s. The outcome was a politically invulnerable representation of Japanese American identity, founded on wartime heroism. One of the most powerful examples comes from Daniel Inouye, future US senator and 442nd veteran. Inouye famously led the US assault on German fortifications on Colle Musatello ridge in Italy. He had intended to blow up a German bunker when his right arm was shot and severed at the elbow, and looked to find his grenade "clenched in a fist that suddenly didn't belong to [him] anymore."[58] The lieutenant pried the explosive out of his severed hand with his left arm and destroyed the German bunker. He killed two German soldiers, and collapsed only after his fifth gunshot wound. This and other awe-inspiring stories became cemented in American consciousness as proof of AJA patriotism.

[57] US Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Statehood for Hawaii," 83rd Congress, January 1954: 186.

[58] Bill Yenne, "Rising Sons: The Japanese American GIs who Fought for the United States in World War II," Manhattan: St. Martin's Press, 2007: 216.

Veterans effectively referenced these experiences in their demands for redress and recognition, as well as in their own political ventures. In 1954, Inouye delivered a famous speech at a local rally for the territorial legislature, stating: "I gave this arm to fight fascists. If my country wants the other one to fight communists, it can have it. What are you prepared to give?"[59] Inouye's assertion of American patriotism on behalf of the Japanese American community was a striking display of the political confidence the community had developed in just six years. This confidence allowed Japanese Americans to share their wartime experiences with the public as a source of pride and honor, rather than humiliation, and present themselves as important assets to the US during the Cold War. Importantly, it also sustained the moral power of the pro-statehood movement, presenting admission as a form of redress owed to the Japanese American community for its sacrifices.

As a result, Japanese Americans' narrative rapidly overpowered Native Hawaiian interests. The AJA community's demands for symbolic justice through statehood was politically appealing to Congress and the American public, as it did not require transformational reform of the country's political practices. Fundamentally, admission was a request for accommodation in the pre-existing political system, not a demand to change it. And, importantly, statehood would not demand expenses from American taxpayers, who were economically weary after nearly two decades of frugality, scarcity, and rationing from the Great Depression and World War II. In contrast, working-class Native Hawaiians' demands for economic reform required implicit acknowledgement that American capitalism was oppressive—an impossible request in the context of the Cold War—and required concrete financial support, which would cost American taxpayers. As such, Native Hawaiian interests and demands were not viable.

[59] Daniel K. Inouye, quote from Campaign Rally for Hawaii Territorial Legislature, 1954. Accessed via Daniel K. Inouye Institute: https://dkii.org/quotes/quote-9/

As a result, Native Hawaiians were quickly and near totally marginalized in statehood discourse by 1954. The lack of representation and attention afforded to them could not have been more blatantly obvious, along three lines. First, the Native Hawaiians who managed to make themselves present before Congress in the 1950s were all elites. The working class was completely silenced in just six years' time, despite their powerful presence in the 1948 hearings. Second, there were no Native Hawaiian statehood opponents present to testify before Congress, given the already striking unpopularity of opposition due to its associations with anti-Japanese racism. Such sentiments were confirmed before Congress by former territorial governors Ingram Stainback and Oren Long, both of whom confirmed that "a great many people here are opposed to [statehood], but few, if any, would care to express themselves publicly."[60]

Last, although there were Native Hawaiian statehood advocates still working at the Capitol, they were overshadowed and spoken over by white and Japanese American interests. In 1954, Native Hawaiian delegates Samuel Wilder King, Bernard Trask, William F. Thompson III, Calvin McGregor, Flora Hayes, Akoni Pule, and Charles Kauhane met with congressional representatives outside of the hearings in order to convince them to vote in favor of statehood.[61] Despite lobbying, none testified before the Senate that year; thus, none were included in public, national discourse. Their lack of visibility was a visible symptom of their disempowerment, when just six years prior they had exercised impressive influence over the statehood debate. This precipitous decline confined Native Hawaiian interests to private meetings, while simultaneously, Japanese American interests were catapulted into the national spotlight.

[60] US Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Statehood for Hawaii," 83rd Congress, 1st and 2nd session on S.49, S.51, and H.R. 3575, June and July 1953, January 1954: 281.

[61] "Index of Information: Hawaii Legislature Statehood Delegation," information packet provided for statehood delegates in 1954, p. 487-602. University of Hawaii at Manoa Archives, "Matsunaga Papers," SMM: C-581.

SECTION EIGHT: POLITICAL CLIMATE OF THE LATE 1950's

The reversal of political fortunes between the Japanese American and Native Hawaiian communities intensified to extremes in the final statehood hearings of 1957-1959. While Native Hawaiians were overwhelmingly excluded from the chambers in these years, Japanese Americans dominated, both in terms of tangible, physical representation and the preeminence of their symbolic interests in racial justice.

An important facilitator of the AJA community's rise in political legitimacy was the increasing proportion of veterans elected to Congress. By 1955, 60% of Congress were veterans, and many explicitly empathized with Japanese Americans for their shared experiences of patriotism and service. Such expressions of empathy were incredibly moving and impactful on the American public. For example, Senator Frank Church of Idaho, a veteran of World War II, stated before the legislature: "I had an opportunity to serve with a number of Nisei in the Far East... And I have never known a group of men who displayed a greater dedication to duty or who demonstrated a more steadfast loyalty to their country than those Nisei."[62] Other senators followed Church's lead and accentuated the outstanding record of AJA veterans. Senator John Saylor of Pennsylvania, for example, went out of his way to document on the congressional record that the 442nd suffered the greatest casualties of World War II and was the most decorated unit in US history.[63] By using their credibility to back the AJA community, congressmen such as Church and Saylor advanced AJA legitimacy before the American public.

The empathy white congressmen afforded Japanese Americans would prove integral to the group's ascendance in statehood discourse. Sympathetic congressmen actively enforced

[62] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 45-46.
[63] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 89.

sociopolitical norms that uplifted the AJA community and condemned anti-Japanese racism, consequently denying legitimacy to a great deal of anti-statehood arguments. For example, John Gilmont, a private citizen of California, wrote to the Senate: "If statehood should be granted to Hawaii… you will have two Japanese Senators in your August body. We are all too close to Pearl Harbor Day to permit such insult to our men lying in the hulk of Arizona and in the sod of Punch Bowl."[64] Senator James Murray of Montana, chairman of the presiding Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, expressed his disdain with Gilmont's sentiment and stated firmly: "Candor compels me to say that I have known many American citizens of Asiatic ancestry, both in Hawaii and elsewhere, with whom I would be proud to sit in the Senate of the United States and who would make valuable contributions to our country: yours, mine, and theirs."[65]

In a similar case to Gilmont's, Richard Lloyd Jones, a private citizen from Oklahoma, penned an aggravated anti-statehood letter to Congress. He opened his remarks with, "do we Americans want to put a couple of Japs in the Senate of the United States?", and went on to argue that Japanese Americans were threats to the US. Murray responded, stating that the letter was based on "racism and factual error." Murray refuted each of Jones' claims, and then concluded: "Perhaps the ultimate test [of loyalty and patriotism] is the willingness to fight and die for one's country. Hawaii has met this test nobly."[66] Given that Congress had refused to accept that AJA service had proved Hawaii's worthiness for admission in 1946, Murray's statement demonstrates the long-run success of Japanese Americans' political narrative.

With greater regard to short-run development, the incidents between Gilmont, Jones, and Murray also show the increase in AJA influence from the statehood hearings of 1954. Just three

[64] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 89.
[65] US. Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 89.
[66] US. Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 101-102.

years prior, Japanese Americans had influential civilian allies, like Fasi, who defended them from prejudiced people like Senator Malone; however, they still faced challenges with gaining recognition from Congress. The 1957 Gilmont-Jones-Murray confrontations show that such challenges were quickly overcome. Japanese Americans now had several allies in Congress—even the chairman of the committee presiding over the hearings—who actively, and of their own volition, defended them from racism wielded by statehood opponents.

This environment of positive external support reinforced the AJA community's political confidence and mobilization. Japanese American veterans became increasingly comfortable with sharing their wartime experiences, which helped them to define Japanese American identity as patriotic and heroic. For example, Mike Masaoka, a 442nd veteran and leader of the JACL, testified in favor of statehood: "I am sure that Senator Jackson is aware of the great contributions which Americans of Japanese ancestry made in World War II, for many of our greatest heroes came from his state… The war record of Japanese-Americans illustrates that there is no part of America which is more American than Hawaii."[67] Senator Jackson, moved, affirmed Masaoka's statement. Assertions of Japanese American patriotism increased AJA pride, incentivizing more veterans to come forward with their stories. Furthermore, by projecting Japanese Americans' loyalty onto Hawaii, Masaoka and other veterans argued that AJA deservingness of equal citizenship was inextricable from Hawaii's deservingness of statehood.

These associations between Japanese American identity and the territory of Hawaii made Japanese Americans the face of the islands and the dominant players in statehood discourse. This was incredibly problematic for Native Hawaiians, who, as the islands' indigenous peoples,

[67] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 139.

felt that such influence was their prerogative alone. However, the marginalization of Native Hawaiian identity was unstoppable by the late 1950s, making this replacement near inevitable.

At the national level, the group suffered from abysmal representation. The few Hawaiians who testified were elites of mixed white and Hawaiian ancestry who, although authentically identifying as Native Hawaiian, were often of less than one-fourth Hawaiian ancestry. At best—in terms of visual racial representation—the elites looked racially ambiguous; at worst, they were indistinguishable from full white individuals. For example, part-Hawaiian territorial governor and statehood advocate Samuel Wilder King was incredibly white-passing. Unless he disclosed his ancestry, Congress did not recognize they were speaking with a Native Hawaiian man. Although appearance alone is a poor marker of authentic racial identity, the absence of full or even non-white-passing Hawaiians is a clear indicator of erasure. For most mainland Americans who had never personally interacted with indigenous Hawaiians, the overrepresentation of white-passing elites established the notion that white identity and Hawaiian identity—and by extension, white interests and Hawaiian interests—were synonymous. This whitewashing of Native Hawaiian identity made it impossible for the community to maintain its sole, legitimate claims to the islands in the face of Japanese American ascendance.

Furthermore, by the late 1950s, the AJA community's pro-statehood narrative had successfully framed admission as a reparational vehicle for attaining just recognition of equal citizenship for Japanese Americans. This harmed Native Hawaiians of both pro-statehood and anti-statehood opinions. Because of the gravity of the Japanese American community's suffering during the Second World War, Native Hawaiians inserting their interests into the pro-statehood movement were viewed as wrongfully detracting attention from the AJA community. Alternatively, Native Hawaiians arguing against statehood—regardless of whether their reasons

for doing so were steeped in anti-Japanese racism or not—were taken as betrayals of their Japanese American neighbors. This structural disadvantage further inhibited the Native Hawaiian community from mobilizing, thereby preventing it from mitigating its political marginalization.

SECTION NINE: 1959 PLEBISCITE AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN MARGINALIZATION

On March 18th, 1959, the Hawaii Admission Act passed with an 83% majority in the Senate and a 78% majority in the House.[68] By law, Congress ordered a resultant plebiscite to be issued within the territorial referendum which gave Hawaii voters the final say over statehood. In late June, with record high voter turnout of 90%, the islands overwhelmingly confirmed admission with 94% approval.[69] For context, by 1959, Japanese Americans retained their 32% plurality of the islands' population, while Native Hawaiians had only marginally decreased to 17%.[70] The plebiscite's overwhelming confirmation of statehood shows that by 1959, support for admission was not restricted to a certain voting bloc or racial group. With this, historians have by and large characterized the plebiscite as definitive proof that statehood history is a story of success for all Hawaii residents, in tandem with the dominant narrative of admission.

However, this conclusion is fundamentally flawed. The plebiscite cannot be used as definitive proof that statehood was strictly preferred to other statuses, nor can it be used to accurately describe voter sentiment, for two reasons. First, the plebiscite was operationalized as a binary, offering only two options: admission into the Union as a state, or maintaining territorial

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68 Public Law 86-3, "An Act to Provide for Admission of the State of Hawaii into the Union," 73 Statute 4, ABN: S.50, March 18, 1959.

69 Bell, *Last Among Equals,* 1984: 291.

70 "Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2002," 1960 US Census, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2010-05-21.

status. A constrained choice does not automatically demonstrate strict preference, as it excludes alternatives an agent may have chosen had they been given the capacity. This fact is clearly illustrated by the statehood plebiscite's failure to incorporate the diversity of anti-statehood opinion and alternative choices raised by the Native Hawaiian community.

As Native Hawaiian scholar-activist Mililani B. Trask has argued, the indigenous peoples' rejection of admission was not synonymous with support for territorial status.[71] The ultimate goal many Hawaiian statehood opponents held was Hawaiian sovereignty and independence from the US. Thus, the fact that Hawaiian independence was not included as an option on the plebiscite meant that many Native Hawaiians were forced to decide between two unfavorable choices. At the end of the day, statehood was taken as the lesser of two evils, given its greater capacity for local governance and independence from federal oversight—both of which were closer to Hawaiian sovereignty than was territorial status.

Besides outright independence, some statehood opponents had argued for different political statuses as alternatives to statehood. John Ho'opale and Alice Kamokila Campbell, for example, notably suggested Commission and Commonwealth statuses, but Congress had dismissed both as discriminatory because they would restrict Hawaii residents from exercising equal rights of citizenship.[72] This objection completely missed the underlying desires of Hawaiian nationalism, which sought separation from American citizenship altogether. The exclusion of alternate statuses from the plebiscite essentially silenced the anti-statehood Hawaiian population, and erased from history the diversity of Hawaiian political aspirations.

[71] Mililani B. Trask, "Hawaii and the United Nations," *Amerasia Journal 26:2, 2000, 27-30.*
[72] US Senate, "Statehood for Hawaii," 85th Congress, 1957: 101-102.

The second reason that the plebiscite is insufficient for affirming the dominant historical narrative lies in its erasure of Hawaiians' diverse reasons and degrees of support for statehood. As previously discussed, the Hawaiian working class largely viewed admission as a vehicle for economic relief. Recall Ernest U'u, who testified in 1946: "Perhaps in some way if we get statehood, [Hawaiians] will be taken care of by the Federal Government … That is the only reason [I want it]."[73] The choice between territorial status and statehood, to the working class, constituted a choice between accepting or rejecting the economic status quo. Of course, given the group's intense desperation and suffering, the latter was the rational choice—but it logically follows that any alternative constituting some semblance of change would have been preferred over territorial status. Therefore, the plebiscite does not prove that Hawaiian voters actively supported statehood; it only proves that Hawaiian voters actively rejected territorial status.

The plebiscite cannot be represented as genuine evidence of the dominant historical narrative. Just as Native Hawaiians' interests in statehood were disregarded during the hearings of the 1950s, their experiences and needs were marginalized after admission was confirmed. As a result, many Native Hawaiians entered a period of mourning while the rest of the territory began celebrations. Social and religious events allowed Native Hawaiians to voice their distress in a manner that would not challenge the new political order. One of the most poignant examples comes from Reverend Abraham Akaka of Kawaihao Church, an influential religious leader of the Native Hawaiian community. On March 13th, shortly after the passage of the Admission Act, Akaka delivered an unplanned sermon to a crowd of over one thousand listeners. Akaka's sermon, "Aloha ke Akua," encouraged optimism toward statehood—but also gave voice to the despair the indigenous peoples felt.

[73] US House of Representatives, "Statehood for Hawaii," 79th Congress, 1946: 323.

"There are some of us to whom statehood brings great hopes, and there are some to whom statehood brings silent fears. There are fears that statehood will turn Hawaii into a great big spiritual junkyard filled with smashed dreams, worn-out illusions; that will make the Hawaiian people lonely, confused, insecure, empty, anxious, restless, disillusioned – a wistful people..."[74]

SECTION TEN: AFTERMATH—SHIFTING SOLIDARITY

The battle for statehood ultimately diminished the racial solidarity Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans forged during the Massie Affair of the 1930s. The Massie Affair had convinced many that accommodation within the US was not worth the trauma. This grievance was markedly relinquished by Japanese Americans after the Second World War. The community recognized that equal American citizenship would proactively protect them from abuses like the Massie Affair and incarceration. As such, the AJA community argued for accommodation into the American body politic through admission into the Union. This drastic change in AJA sentiment seemed incongruous with the solidarity it had forged with Native Hawaiians in the 1930s, and expectedly created dissonance in the communities' relationships.

It did not help that the AJA pro-statehood narrative, with its emphasis on patriotism and military heroism, aligned the community with the federal government and the US Armed Forces, both of which were highly resented by Native Hawaiians. The federal government was both a paternalistic and oppressive force against Native Hawaiian political development, while the US Armed Forces—specifically the Navy—had colonized and imported white settler populations into the islands. AJA veterans' bonds with white congressmen, along with the community's conflation of Americanism with heroism and nobility, went in direct opposition to the indigenous community's lived experiences. As such, many moderate and anti-statehood Native Hawaiians were disturbed by Japanese Americans' pro-statehood arguments at the national level.

[74] Reverend Abraham Akaka, "Hawaii Statehood Address: Aloha ke Akua," given March 13, 1959, Kawaiahao Church.

Holistically, Japanese American alignment with the US implicitly suggested that they had picked equality with whites over solidarity with racial minorities. These perceptions by Native Hawaiians were well-grounded in the tangible political consequences they suffered as a result of AJA activism. Though unintended, the Japanese American pro-statehood narrative furthered the model minority myth, which argues that disadvantaged peoples need to prove themselves worthy of justice through sacrifice in the face of suffering. In the context of Hawaiian statehood, the myth asserts that Japanese Americans—only through the blood shed by their sons overseas and years wasted away in prison camps—proved they were deserving of equal citizenship.

By recognizing Japanese Americans as equal citizens only in the aftermath of their military service, the US set a damning political precedent for future civil rights struggles. Justice would only be afforded to victimized groups that could prove themselves worthy, with worthiness determined by the benchmark set by Japanese Americans. Comparisons between AJA's and other groups' hardships is inherently unfair, as the Japanese American incarceration and the heroism of the 442nd, 100th Battalion, and MIS could not have been more blatant contrasts between suffering and sacrifice. For racial minorities facing structural discrimination, a comparable narrative was impossible. As a result, Native Hawaiians were rewarded none of the dignity or reparations the model minority myth promised, though they were consistently held to and crushed beneath the weight of its impossible expectations.

At the end of the long battle for statehood, the final outcome ironically proved to be a paradox in the realm of civil rights and minority relations. For each door opened for Japanese Americans, one was quietly shut for Native Hawaiians, excluding the indigenous peoples from the fate of their own lands.

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORIOGRAPHY: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Recent scholarship on statehood has oscillated between two extremes—the dominant, pro-Japanese historical narrative, which upholds admission as a civil rights victory—and the pro-indigenous counterclaim, which argues that Japanese Americans wrongfully usurped Native Hawaiians' control over their own lands and robbed them of a sovereign Hawaiian nation. The necessary truth is that statehood occupies a complex middle ground. Given that Japanese Americans justifiably feared future civil rights violations from the US—and that their past experiences were based in the horrors of prison camps, forced labor, unlawful expropriation of property, and bloodshed overseas—Japanese American statehood advocacy was an inspiring display of courage that should be recognized. At the same time, AJA ascendancy exacerbated and catalyzed the marginalization of the islands' indigenous peoples during a period in which advocacy for their interests—especially those based in economic reform—were tantamount to ensuring working-class survival.

Yet both narratives fail to acknowledge Native Hawaiian diversity and fail to balance historical agency and circumstance. This project—though amidst constraints under the pandemic—has worked to address both issues. With regard to Native Hawaiian diversity, it is abundantly clear that Native Hawaiians were not the pro-statehood or neutral monolith the dominant historical narrative makes them out to be; nor were they the nationalist movement the counterclaim often posits. As such, claims that AJA ascendance negatively impacted Native Hawaiian nationalists are correct, but not all-encompassing. Japanese American ascendance in statehood was deleterious to all indigenous peoples of all statehood opinions and interests. Native Hawaiians of pro-statehood sentiment, for example, lost influence over the national debate and were prevented from advocating for their interests—especially consequential for the

working class, which lost hope for economic relief and justice. Therefore, a full and accurate depiction of statehood history must consider the effects AJA activism had on all Hawaiians, not just those who rejected admission on nationalist grounds.

The issue of interest-based diversity also ties into the diversity of identity exhibited by the Native Hawaiian community. Many Hawaii residents did not feel that their identities were strictly confined to their racial ancestry, as Hawaii's highly multicultural society exposed them to a variety of ethnic influences. This complicated identity for Native Hawaiians, especially those who were mixed-race. Historians on both sides have often struggled to balance the ambiguity of Hawaiian self-identification; for example, counterclaim literature reliably represents mixed Hawaiians of the anti-statehood faction, like Alice Kamokila Campbell, as being authentically Hawaiian. Yet, it withholds similar validation from or ignores mixed-white Hawaiians who supported statehood, like Bernard Trask and Samuel Wilder King. Conversely, the dominant narrative overemphasizes the role Hawaiian racial identity played for mixed-white statehood advocates, implicitly arguing that indigenous identity was conducive to admission whilst refusing to acknowledge the mixed Hawaiians of dissident opinions.

Fundamentally, the authenticity of one's racial identity is not predicated on their political opinion. Although historians of course understand this, the overrepresentation of mixed-Hawaiian elites in the historical record and their radical political stances makes this a difficult issue to overcome for unbiased analysis. However, it is one of the most important endeavors for future Hawaiian history. Along with the obvious consequences of historical bias, this problematic historiographical trend has worsened the marginalization of Hawaiians' economic and political diversity. Because both historiographical factions have spent so much time defending and validating the identities of elite, mixed white-Hawaiian agents, scholarship has

consequently foregone the working-class and full Hawaiian populations. This historical erasure parallels the discriminatory representation Hawaiians faced in the statehood hearings of the 1950s, and constitutes a critical problem for social histories of the Native Hawaiian people.

The final major weakness of both historiographical factions is their imbalance between agency and circumstance. Histories of people of color in the US frequently exhibit disturbing unidimensionality—either portraying non-white individuals as helpless victims and mere objects of circumstance, or as triumphant heroes of simple moral perfection, unperturbed by the political obstacles they face. These notions are radically flawed. In the broad struggle for racial equality, self-determination, and justice, people of color have both bent to their circumstances and actively changed them—and have done both right and wrong in their navigation of racial constraints. Japanese Americans' statehood advocacy did have negative consequences for Native Hawaiians. This is vital to acknowledge. At the same time, many Native Hawaiians utilized anti-Japanese rhetoric when it suited their needs. Conversely, it is also critical to recognize that Native Hawaiian and Japanese American solidarity asserted itself during the resurgence of statehood, even as ethnic competition grew harsh. Throughout the 1930s to 1950s, countless Native Hawaiians across the statehood spectrum argued that their AJA neighbors were loyal Americans. Native Hawaiian territorial official Herbert Ahuna defended Japanese Americans before Congress in 1938: "I found that [those] Japanese boys fight like us Hawaiians, and as well as us Hawaiians."[75] And in 1948, AJA veteran Norito Kawakami spoke of Native Hawaiian servicemen's sacrifices with great admiration: "[They] have paid the full price to their native land—the ground on which they were raised, and the ground in which many of them will be

[75] US Congress, "Statehood for Hawaii," 75th Congress, 1938: 239.

buried when they come back."[76] The dominant narrative and the counterclaim, in their reticence to acknowledge this duality between advocacy and antagonism, refuse to see Japanese Americans and Native Hawaiians as anything less than heroes—and simultaneously—anything more than victims.

The final message this thesis hopes to impart on the reader is that ultimately, the long arc of history toward Hawaiian statehood must be framed within the necessary realities of diversity, empathy, and humanity. While Japanese Americans enjoyed certain political privileges, they were privileges within the context of suffering; their politically convenient narrative of discrimination and sacrifice was an advantage steeped in public suffering and humiliation. Likewise, in analyzing the privileges elite Native Hawaiians held in contrast to their working-class counterparts, it is necessary to remember that wealth did not fully protect individuals from racism and prejudice. Statehood history, and the histories of people of color in this country as a whole, demand careful navigation of what exactly constitutes privilege within the context of dehumanization and oppression.

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